

CLARK. By Frank H. Spearman.

"THERE goes a fellow that walks like Sicione Clark," exclaimed Duck Middle-ton, Duck was sitting in the trainmaster's office with a group of engineers. He was one of the black-listed strikers, and runs an engine now down on the Santa Fe. But at long intervals Duck gets back to revisit the scenes of his early triumphs. The men who surrounded him were once at deadly odds with Duck and his chums, though now the ancient enmities seem forgotten, and Duck the once ferocious Duck-sits occasionally among the new men and gossips about early days on the west end.

"Do you remember Sicione, Reed?" asked Duck, calling to me in the private office.

"Remember him?" I echoed. "Did anybody who ever knew Sicione forget him?"

"I fired passenger for Sicione twenty years ago," resumed Duck. "He walked just like that fellow; only he was quicker. I reckon you fellows don't know what a snap you have here now," he continued, addressing the men around him. "Track fenced; ninety-pound rails; steel and iron; sky-scraper; wonder you get chances to haul such nobs as Lilloukani and Schley and Dewey, and cut out ninety miles an hour on tangents."

"When I was firing for Sicione the road was just off the scrapers; the dumps were soft; pile bridges; mason culverts; fifty-six-pound rails; not a fence west of Buffalo gap, and the plains black with Texas steers. We never closed our eyes for a night; his of the steam frightened the cattle worse than the whistle, and we never knew where we were going to find a bunch of critters or the other."

"The first winter I came out was great for snow, and I was a tenderfoot. The cuts made good and steady, whenever there was a norther they were chuck full of cattle. Every time a train ploughed through the snow it made a path on the tracks. The steers wanted to move they would take the middle of the track single file, and string out mile after mile. Talk about fast schedules and ninety miles an hour. You had to poke along with your cylinders spitting, and just whistle and yell—sort of blow them off into the snowdrifts."

"One day Sicione and I were going west on 58, and we were late; for that matter we were late for a week, coming against us on 60 had caught a bunch of cattle in the rock cut, just west of the Saddle, and killed a couple. When we got out the cattle had been a thousand head of steers mousing around the dead ones. Sicione—he used to be a cowboy, you know—Sicione then said, 'I'll make a wake. At any rate, they were still coming from every direction and as far as you could see a herd of steers.'"

"Hold on, Sicione, and I'll chase them out," I said.

"That's the stuff, Duck," says he, "get after them and see what you can do." He looked kind of queer, but I never thought anything. I picked up a Jack bar and started up the track.

"The first fellow we met looked lazy, but he started full quick when I hit him. Then he turned around to inspect me, and I noticed his horns were the broad-gauge variety. While I whacked another the first on, put his head down and began to snort and paw the ties; then they all began to back up at once; it looked smoky. I dropped the jackbar and started for the engine, and about fifty of them started for me."

"I never had an idea steers could run so; you could have played checkers on my heels all the way back. If Sicione had come along with me, I'd never have got back in the world. I just jumped the pilot and went clear over against the boilerhead. Sicione claimed I tried to climb the smokestack; but he was excited. Anyway, he stood out there with a shovel and kept the whole bunch off me. I thought they would kill him; but I never tried to chase range steers on foot again."

"In the spring we got the rains; not like you get now, but cloudbursts. The section men were good fellows, only sometimes we would get into a storm miles from a section gap, and strike a place where we couldn't see a thing."

"Then Sicione would stop the train, take a bar, and get down ahead and round the road end. Many and many a washout he struck that way which would have wrecked our train and wound up our ball of yarn in a minute. Often when Sicione would go into his division without a dry thread on him."

"Those were different days," mused the grizzled striker. "The old boys scattered now all over this broad land. The strike did it; and our fellows have the snap. But what I wonder, often and often is whether Sicione is really alive or not."

"Sicione Clark was one of the two cowboys who helped Harvey Reynolds and Ed Banks save 53 at Griffin the night the coal train ran down from Ogallala. They were both taken into the service; Sicione, after a while, went to wiping."

"When Bucks asked his name, Sicione answered, 'S. Clark.'"

"What's your full name?" asked Bucks.

"S. Clark."

"But what does S. stand for?" persisted Bucks.

"Stands for Cyclone, I reckon; don't it?" retorted the cowboy, with some annoyance.

"It was not usual in those days on the plains to know a man so closely about his name. There might be reasons why it would not be esteemed courteous."

"I reckon it do," replied Bucks, dropping into Sicione's grammar; and without a quiver he registered the new man as Sicione Clark; and his checks always read that way. The name seemed to fit; he adopted it without any objection; and, after everybody came to know him, it fitted so well that Bucks was believed to have second sight when he named the hair-brained fireman. He could get up a storm quicker than any man on the division, and, if he felt so disposed, stop one quicker."

"In spite of his eccentricities, which were many, and his headstrong way of doing some things, Sicione Clark was a good engineer, and deserved a better fate than the one that befell him. 'Though—who can tell?'—it may have been just to his liking."

"The strike was the worst thing that ever happened to Sicione. He was one of those big hearted, violent fellows who went into it loaded with enthusiasm. He had nothing to gain by it; at least, nothing to speak of. But the idea that somebody on the east end needed their help led him like Sicione in; and they thought it a cinch that the company would have to take them all back."

"The consequence was that, when we staggered along without them, men like Sicione, easily aroused, naturally of violent passions, and with no self-restraint, stopped at nothing to cripple the service. And they looked on the men who took their places as enemies neither to liberty nor life."

"When our men began coming from the Reading to replace the strikers, every one wondered who would get Sicione Clark's engine, the 313. Sicione and gently sworn to kill the first man who took out the 313 and bar nobody."

"Whatever others thought of Sicione's vapors, they counted for a good deal on the west end; nobody wanted trouble with him."

Even Neighbor, who feared no man, sort of killed the 313 lay in her stall as long as possible, after the trouble began."

"Nothing was said about it. Threats came thick and fast, but nobody was ever so much as threatened with threats all the time; they had long since ceased to move us. At Sicione's engine stayed in the roundhouse."

"Then, after Foley and McTerza and Sinclair, came Fitzpatrick from the engine house. McTerza was put on the mails, and, coming down one day on the White Flyer, he blew a cylinder head out of the 416."

"Fitzpatrick was waiting to take her out when she came stumping in on one pair of drivers—for we were using engines worse than horseflesh then. But of course the 416 was put out. The only 416 left in the house was the 313."

"I imagine Neighbor felt the finger of fate in it. The mail had to go. 'The time has come for the 313,' he ordered her fired."

"The man that ran this engine swore sort of killed the mail that took her out," said Neighbor, sort of incidentally, as Fitz stood by waiting for her to steam."

"I suppose that means me," said Fitzpatrick.

"I suppose it does."

"Sicione Clark is it?"

"Sicione Clark," shifted to the other leg. "Did he say what I would be doing this morning?"

"Something in Fitzpatrick's manner made Neighbor laugh. Other things crowded in and no more was said. No more was thought in fact. The 313 rolled as kindly for Fitzpatrick as for Sicione, and the new engineer, a quiet fellow like Foley, only a good bit better, went on and on her with never a word for the old chief."

"One day Fitzpatrick dropped into a barber shop to get shaved. In the next chair lay Sicione Clark. Sicione got through with his shaving, stepped over to the table to get his hat, picked up Fitzpatrick's by mistake, and walked out with it. He discovered his change as he stepped into the street. Sicione came back, replaced the hat on the table—it had Fitzpatrick's name pasted in the crown—took up his own hat, and Fitz reached for his, looked at him."

"Every one in the shop caught their breaths."

"What your name Fitzpatrick?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mine in Clark."

"Fitzpatrick put on his hat. 'The matter we were talking of, I believe,' continued Sicione."

"Yes, sir."

"That's my engine."

"I thought it belonged to the company."

"Maybe it does; but I've agreed to kill the man that takes her out before the engine is settled," said Sicione, amiably.

"Fitzpatrick met him steadily. 'If you'll let me know when it takes place, I'll try and get there next time. I won't jump on any man without fair warning; any of the boys will tell you that,' continued Sicione."

"Maybe you didn't know my word was out."

"Fitzpatrick hesitated. 'I'm not looking for trouble with any man,' he replied, guardedly. 'But since you've disposed to be fair about notice, it's only fair to you to say that I did know your word was out.'"

"Still you took her?"

"It was my order."

"My word is out; the boys know it is good. I don't jump any man without fair warning. I know you now, Fitzpatrick, and I'll tell you, see you, look out," and without more ado Sicione walked out of the shop; greatly to the relief of the barber, if not of Fitz."

"Fitzpatrick may have wiped a little sweat from his face; but he said nothing—only walked down to the roundhouse and waited for the 313 as usual for his run."

"A week passed between the two men met again. One night Sicione with a crowd of his friends, about half a dozen of the new men, Fitzpatrick among them, and there was a riot. It was Sicione's time to carry out his intention for the 313. He had been scorned to try to get away. No tree ever breasted a tornado more sturdily than the Irish engineer withstood Sicione; but when he got to the engine with his wrecking crew and straightened things out, Fitzpatrick was picked up for dead. That night Sicione disappeared."

"Warrants were gotten out and searchers put after him; yet nobody could or would apprehend him. It was generally understood that the sudden disappearance was one of Sicione's freaks. If the ex-cowboy had so determined he would not have hidden to keep out of anybody's way. He had scorned to try to get away. No tree ever breasted a tornado more sturdily than the Irish engineer withstood Sicione; but when he got to the engine with his wrecking crew and straightened things out, Fitzpatrick was picked up for dead. That night Sicione disappeared."

"Down east of the depot grounds at McCloud stands, or stood, a great hunk hotel, built in boom days, and long a favorite resting place for invalids and travelers en route to California by easy stages. It was nicknamed the barracks. Many railroad men boarded there and the new engineers liked it because it was close to the roundhouse and away from the strikers."

"Fitzpatrick, without a whine or a complaint, was put to bed in the barracks, and, as the night wore on, he was given charge of the case; a trained nurse was provided besides. Nobody thought the injured man would live. But, given him, we turned our attention to the troublesome task of operating the road."

"The 313, whether it happened so, or whether Neighbor thought it well to drop the disputed machine temporarily, was not taken out again for three weeks. She was looked on as a hoodoo, and nobody wanted her. Foley refused point-blank one day to take her, claiming that he had troubles of his own. Then, one day, something happened by the engine house. The 313 was stranded for a locomotive, and the 313 was brought out for McTerza; he didn't like it a bit."

"Meantime nothing had been said or heard of Sicione. That, in fact, was the reason Neighbor urged for using his engine. He seemed as good as dead. The 313 was out brought out Sicione, not to speak of worse things. That morning about 3 o'clock the unlucky engine was coupled on to the White Flyer. The night boy at the barracks always got up a hot lunch for the incoming and outgoing crews on the mail run, and that morning when he was through he forgot to turn off the lamp under his coffee tank. It overheated the counter, and in a few minutes the woodwork was on fire. The frightened boy had emptied the coffee on the counter he could have put out the fire, but he ran out to get the alarm, and started upstairs to arouse the guests."

"There were at least fifty people asleep in the house, traveling on the mail run, and that morning when he was through he forgot to turn off the lamp under his coffee tank. It overheated the counter, and in a few minutes the woodwork was on fire. The frightened boy had emptied the coffee on the counter he could have put out the fire, but he ran out to get the alarm, and started upstairs to arouse the guests."

"When I got down men were jumping in every direction from the burning hotel. Railroaders swarmed around, busy with schemes for getting the people out, for more is more quick-witted in time of panic. Short as the opportunity was, there were many pretty rescues, until the flames, shooting up,

cut off the stairs, and left the helpers nothing for it but to stand and watch the destruction of the long rambling building. Half a dozen of us looked from the dispatchers' offices in the second-story depot. We had agreed that the people were all out when Foley below gave a cry and pointed to the south gable. Away up under the eaves at the third-story window we saw a face—it was Fitzpatrick."

"Everybody had forgotten Fitzpatrick as nurse. Behind, as the flames lighted the opening, we could see the nurse struggling to get him to the window. It was plain that the engineer was trying to help himself. The two men were in deadly peril; a great cry went up."

"The crowd swarmed like ants around the south gable. A dozen men called for ladders; but there were no ladders. They called for volunteers to go in after the two men; but the stairs were not since a furnace. There were men in plenty to take any kind of chance, however slight, but no chance offered."

"The nurse ran to the man that took her out, seeking a loop hole for escape. Fitzpatrick dragged himself higher on the eaves, and looked down on the crowd. They begged him to jump—held out their arms. He looked at them again side by side, and he looked like a farewell. There was no calling from them, no appeal. The nurse would not desert his charge, and we saw it all."

"Suddenly there was a cry below, and the confused shouting of the crowd, and one running forward parted the men at the front and, clearing the fence, jumped into the yard under the burning building."

"Before people recognized him a tarant was swinging over his head—it was Sicione Clark. The rope left his arm like a slingshot and flew straight at Fitzpatrick. Not seeing, or confused, he missed it, and the rope, with a groan, cut through the crowd, settled back. The crowd caught it again in a loop and shot it upward, that time fairly over Fitzpatrick's head."

"The crowd roared. Sicione, Fitzpatrick shouted back, and the two men above drew taut. Hand over hand Sicione Clark crept up, like a monkey, against the smoking, smoking clappings, edging away from the vomiting windows, swinging on the single and of horsehair, and followed by a hundred prayers unaided."

"Men who didn't know what tears were tried to cry out to keep the choking before he covered the last five feet, and the men above caught frantically at his hands."

"Fitzpatrick himself over the easement, he was just with them a moment; then, from behind a burst of smoke, they saw him rigging a maverick saddle on Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick lifted by Clark and the nurse over the sill, lowered like a wooden tie, whirling and swinging down into the crowd below. The fireman had got the crowd thinner, the nurse, following, slid like a cat down the incline; but not an instant later, a ton of flame hit the gable from below and licked the horsehair up into a curling, frizzling thread; and Sicione stood alone in the upper easement."

"It seemed for the moment he stood there the crowd would go mad. The shock and the abiding mark to cuff fuse him; it may have been the hot air took his breath. They yelled to him to jump; but he swayed uncertainly. One, an old man named Sankey, was seen to look down; then he drew back from the easement. I never saw him again."

"The flames wrapped the building in a yellow fury; by daylight the big barracks were a smoldering pile of ruins. So little water was thrown that it was a miracle that the building could stand up to the week. The tragedy had blotted out the feud between the strikers and the new men. Side by side they stood, and the crowd, as Sicione and Fitzpatrick had stood in the morning, striving to uncover the mystery of the missing man, day twice as many men were in the ruins."

"Fitzpatrick, while we were searching, called continually for Sicione Clark. We didn't tell him the truth; indeed, we didn't know it; nor do we yet know it. Every brace, every beam, every brick was taken from the charred pile. Every foot of clinders, every handful of ashes sifted; but a human being the searchers found never a trace. Not a bone, not a key, not a knife, not a button, not a nail, not a splinter, not a hair. Like the smoke which swallowed him up, he had disappeared completely and forever."

"Is he alive? I cannot tell."

"But this I know."

"Years afterwards Sidney Blair, head of our engineering department, was looking yet, for a coast outlet."

"He took only a flying camp with him, traveling in the lightest kind of camp, and the victim went with the cattle-men he ran across."

"One night, away down in the Panhandle, they fell in with an outfit driving a bunch of range steers into the Grass trail. Blair noted that the foreman was a character. A man of few words, but of great muscular strength; and, moreover, a frightfully scared man. He was silent and inclined to be morose at first, but after he learned Blair was from McCloud, he unbent a bit, and after a time began asking questions which indicated a surprising familiarity with the northern country and with our road. In particular, this man asked what had become of Bucks, and, when told what had happened to him, he had grown, asserted, with a sudden bitterness and without in any way leading up to it, that with Bucks

was a well organized gang of colored women. The grifters has been robbing strangers from the rural districts for some time, almost in the sight of a window in the police station, where Chief Samuel Paul may be seen for five or ten minutes each day attending to his 'duties' as head of the police department. Scarcely a day passes that a report is not received at the station of a bold theft committed by some one of this gang. The women are generally arrested and released at once on bond, furnished by a powerful protector. The victim, whose name the police use every effort in their power to keep secret, and a part of his money back, and the case is dropped. Yesterday afternoon Frank Irwin, a pilgrim from Colorado, came into the station and reported that a colored man had robbed him of \$10. The police made strenuous efforts to conceal the story from the public, but the victim was loud in his request that his money be returned to him at once. Officer Emil Johnson then brought in Jesse Baker, who is alleged to have taken the money, and the victim went out of the station a little later with his money in his pocket."

"On Friday 'Albert Mathews' was robbed of a watch and \$45 in money by a colored woman, supposed to be Ada Neal. The woman was arrested and released on bond. Yesterday the case against her was continued, and 'Mathews' was given his watch back on Monday to prosecute. It is believed that he will care to appear in court, and Irwin stated yesterday that he would not appear."

"There are a number of women in this gang, which has been fleeing strangers for weeks, and some of them have reputations for circles elsewhere for a certain deftness with their fingers. The police are aware of this fact, but fail to order them to leave town, as other cities in which they have operated have done. Knowing that they may count, either on the incompetency or the quasi protection of Chief Paul, the women of this gang arrive in the city every day, and the large building, Commercial alley in which they live is fully occupied."

"FISHERIES TREATY."

"Washington, Nov. 8.—Secretary Hay, for the United States, and Sir Michael Herbert, representing the British government and the government of Newfoundland, today at the state department signed what is known as the Bond-Hay treaty, providing for reciprocity between the United States and Newfoundland, covering fish products and bait."

"The reader may have remembered that the treaty will be submitted to the senate immediately upon its receipt. It is rather mean while, following the rule in such cases, the state department refrains from making public the details of the instrument."

"YELLOWSTONE PARK DREW MANY VISITORS."

"Washington, Nov. 8.—The annual report of the hunting superintendant of the Yellowstone National park predicts that there will be large increases in every species of large game there throughout the season. It says that bear are harmless while left alone and kept in a perfect wild state, but when fed and petted they lose all fear of human beings, cause damage to property and are dangerous to those who trifle with

them. It is suggested that the black cock and the capercaillie, game birds of northern Europe, be introduced into the park. Only two forest fires of any size occurred during the year, and neither caused great damage. It is

recommended that the Yellowstone be enlarged to a four-troop, or squadron, post, and be garrisoned by the troops of two different regiments. The grand total of all visitors to the park during the season was 15,422.

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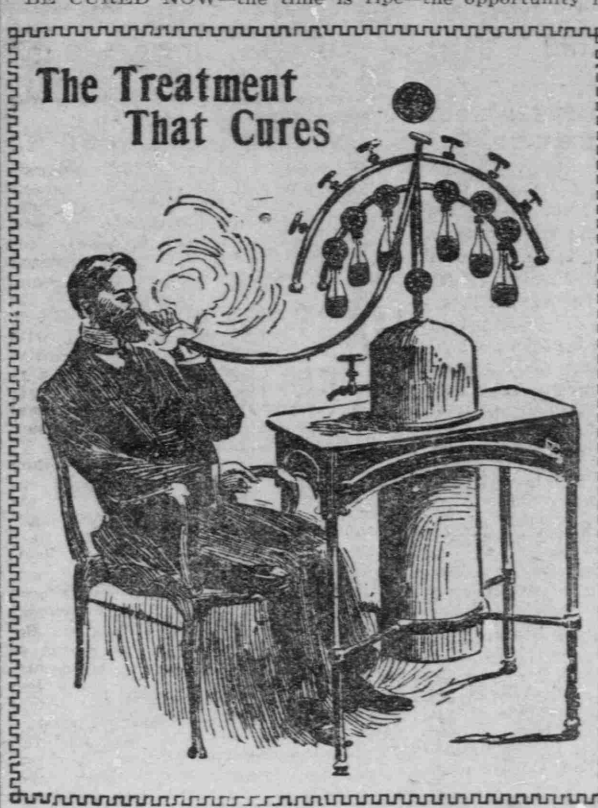
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